“By the Beard of the Prophet”: The Turk in Mozart’s Vienna

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Abstract

In the eighteenth century, the Turk appeared frequently as a subject in European art and literature. *Turquerie*—a fashion for Turkish styles and aesthetics—influenced the paintings, costumes, architecture, and music of the era, and travel literature provided detailed descriptions of the Ottoman realms. These depictions, though, were rarely objective. Artists and authors carried certain assumptions about Turkish culture and government, and often used the Turk for rhetorical or allegorical purposes. In Vienna, the capital of the Austrian Hapsburg Empire, the Turk was cast as a subject and perpetuator of despotism. Austrian productions mocked and vilified the Turk, attacking the cultural and political institutions that supposedly supported this despotism. In doing so, writers and artists supported Enlightened Europeans as the contrast to despotic Turks. European ideas of religion, governance, and love were celebrated as less oppressive and therefore superior to their Turkish counterparts. Thus, artists and writers lent cultural aid to the Austrian Emperor Joseph II's attempts at Enlightened political reform.

As this cultural project unfolded, the young composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart arrived in Vienna, and composed an opera centered around the Turk. His 1782 *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (The Abduction from the Seraglio) incorporated conceptions of the Turk from Viennese literature and other operas, and brought them to the stage of the Burgtheater. In that theater, a newly-developed public audience witnessed Mozart's work. The opera's plot focuses on a European nobleman and his servant attempting to rescue their beloveds from the seraglio of the Turkish Pasha Selim. The conflicts between Europe and Turkey, and Enlightenment and despotism are central to the action and drama of the story, and Mozart incorporated these conflicts into the spoken dialogue and musical language of the opera. At the piece's finale, the Pasha surrenders to Enlightened ideals, transforming from villain to hero and earning the praise of the orchestra, singers, and audience. Through the plot, dialogue, and music of the opera, Mozart continued the narrative of Enlightenment triumphing over despotism, and supported Joseph II's image as an Enlightened monarch.

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Introduction

"By the beard of the Prophet! I study day and night, never resting until I see you killed, no matter what you do."[1] These lines are sung by the Turkish servant Osmin in his aria "Solche hergelauf'ne Laffen" (such profligate dandies), from W.A. Mozart's 1782 opera *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (The Abduction from the Seraglio). Set in a Turkish palace, *Die Entführung* tells the story of a Spanish nobleman rescuing his lover from the clutches of the Turkish Pasha Selim and the servant Osmin. At the time of its composition, a fashion for all things Turkish gripped Europe, and the opera's janissary choruses, harem scenes, and diabolical Turks delighted contemporary audiences. Today, this work is labeled as the apex of operas on Turkish themes, a status earned not only from the fame of the composer, but also the variety of Turkish stereotypes and constructions present in the work.[2] Three of these constructions are at play in Osmin's aria: his death threats label him as a cruel Turk, his mention of the Prophet Muhammed connects him to Islam, and his rivalry with Pedrillo is based on the latter's attempts to enter the seraglio, a space integral to the construction of the Turk. *Die Entführung's* use of both European and Turkish characters, and the conflicts that erupt between the two groups make the opera an invaluable source for the study of the uses and manifestations of eighteenth-century *turquerie*.

Turquerie, or a fashion for Turkish styles and aesthetics, influenced literature, artwork, and music across the European continent during the latter half of the eighteenth century. French artists painted harem scenes and noblemen in Turkish costume, and architects and furniture

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[1] W. A. Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem* Serail, edited by Gerhard Croll (Kassel, Germany: Bärenreiter, 1982), 82. "Drum bei Bärten des Propheten! Ich studiere Tag und Nacht, ruh' nicht bis ich dich seh' töten, nimm dich wie du willst in acht."

[2] Eve R. Meyer "Turquerie and Eighteenth-Century Music." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 7, no. 4 (Summer, 1974): 480.

designers drew influence from Turkish palaces and mosques.[3] English travelers published accounts from the Ottoman Empire and the Near East, a prominent example being Lady Montagu's letters from her time in Istanbul as the wife of the English ambassador. While derived from actual Turkish arts, these European productions freely adapted and synthesized the foreign elements with more familiar ones. Paintings often placed Greco-Roman columns inside the harems, for example, or portrayed women in Turkish costumes within a European palace.

Opera was also swept up in the *turquerie* fad, and provided composers the opportunity to combine Turkish visual and musical motifs. Actors in Turkish costumes moved through Turkish sets, telling Turkish stories and playing Turkish characters, while Turkish music sounded from the orchestra pits. Works such as C.W. Gluck's *La rencontre imprévue* (1764) and Charles Dibdin's *The Sultan, or a Peep into the Seraglio* (1775) transported audiences into a (mostly imagined) world of sultans and harems with their settings and music. Composers also used Turkish themes and music even when the opera was set outside Turkey. *La rencontre*, for example, is set in Egypt, yet Gluck used Turkish music and depicted a Turkish-style harem. Due to the appeal of *turquerie* themes, European audiences willingly overlooked such geographical inaccuracies.

Unlike other expressions of *turquerie*, opera was a public spectacle. Books and paintings would be enjoyed by a higher class audience, and in the privacy of the home. Opera, however, could be an incredibly social affair, performed for every strata of society, and the late eighteenth century saw the formation of a diverse public audience in cities throughout Europe.[4] Vienna's

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[3] For a detailed study of *turquerie* in the visual arts, see Haydn Williams' *Turquerie: An Eighteenth-Century Fantasy*.

[4] Caryl Clark, "Reading and Listening: Viennese Frauenzimmer Journals and the Sociocultural Context of Mozartean Opera Buffa," *The Musical Quarterly* 87, No. 1 (Spring, 2004): 140.

Burgtheater, for example, contained seating for the lower, middle, and aristocratic classes within its performance hall.[5] *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* would have been viewed by this diverse audience when it premiered there, and it is with this urban, Viennese audience that this thesis is most concerned. How did this audience interpret the Turkish characters in *Die Entführung*? What conceptions of Turks did Mozart employ, and why did these resonate with his audience? What role did the Turk play in eighteenth-century Austria's conception of itself as an Empire and a people? These are the questions this thesis hopes to explore.

Austria and the Ottoman Empire

Before the larger questions are addressed, it is first important to understand the relationship and history between the Austrian and Ottoman Empires. The two empires were culturally, religiously, and politically distinct from one another, and shared a long and often violent history. The Austrian Empire was Catholic, Germanic, ruled by the Hapsburg emperors, and based in Vienna. The rival Ottoman Empire on the other hand was Turkish, Muslim, ruled by the sultan and his grand vizier, and centered in Istanbul. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottomans held the upper hand over their northern rivals. With their Janissary armies, the sultans swept through Croatia and Hungary, reaching the gates of gates of Vienna in 1529 and 1683. After this last siege was broken by a combined Polish and Holy Roman Imperial army, the Austrians wrested Hungary from Ottoman control, and the Turkish empire began its decline. In 1830—a century-and-a-half after they threatened one of the capitals of Christian Europe—the Ottomans finally succumbed to European imperialism with the French conquest of

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[5] Thomas Bauman, *W. A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 100.

Algiers. This defeat begot many more, and the Austrian and Russian Empires began to drive the Ottomans out of Europe for good.

During the eighteenth century, however, the Austrians and Ottomans existed in relative balance. While weakened, the Ottomans still managed to hold on to most of their Middle-Eastern and African holdings, and even fought the Austrians and Russians to a draw in 1788. This balanced Austro-Ottoman relationship was part of a larger equilibrium between East and West, from which the distinct characteristics of eighteenth-century European exoticism arose.[6] Historian Larry Wolff argued that Turkish operas could only exist while the Ottoman Empire existed as a threat or equal to the European powers, and the end of Turkish operas coincides with the waning of the Ottomans in the nineteenth century.[7] This theory is compelling, and explains the prevalence of Turks in operas over other exotic peoples.

To an Austrian composer like Mozart, the Turks also had an appeal that other exotic peoples lacked. From fighting multiple wars and sharing a lengthy border, the Austrians were better acquainted with the Ottomans than with other ethnicities. Unlike France, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Spain, Austria had no overseas colonies or outposts, and little first-hand knowledge of Native Americans, Indians, or East Asians. Some degree of familiarity is vital to an orientalist work; aspects of *turquerie* had some basis in actual Turkish culture, after all. A need for familiarity left the Turks as the most viable subject for Austrian orientalist dramas and artwork. Centuries of exchange (violent or otherwise) gave the Austrians conceptions of the

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[6] G.S. Rousseau and Roy Porter, *Exoticism in the Enlightenment* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 14.
[7] Larry Wolff, *The Singing Turk: Ottoman Power and Operatic Emotions on the European Stage from the Siege of Vienna to the Age of Napoleon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 8.

Turks, conceptions which a savvy cultural observer like Mozart could deploy to give his work significance for his audience.

The Turk in *Die Entführung*

The three main conceptions of Turks that Mozart used in *Die Entführung* were mentioned at the beginning of the section. First, the Turkish characters of the opera were portrayed as Muslims. "Muslim" was not a neutral category in European thought, and the label carried with it certain assumptions. Islam was thought to be more conducive to despotism, and Montesquieu argued "That moderate government is better suited to the Christian religion, and despotic government to Mohammedanism."[8] Mozart also portrayed the Turks as cruel, particularly in the form of their government. The Pasha and Osmin threaten the European characters with torture and execution throughout the opera. Finally, the seraglio plays a central role in the drama of the story. Alain Grosrichard argued that Europeans viewed the seraglio as a "supreme tragic site," as well as the embodiment of Oriental despotism.[9] Mozart invented none of these conceptions or tropes, and they all have parallels in other materials from the period.

The Turk is also present in the music of the *Die Entführung*, and the piece contains numerous instances of the *alla turca* music style. This style imitated the instrumentation, rhythms, and harmonic structures of Turkish music, and its use in the opera reinforces various conceptions and stereotypes of the Turks. In "Solche hergelauf'ne Laffen," for example, the *alla turca* music emphasizes Osmin as a cruel Turk, entering as he describes how he will torture the Europeans. Due to its distinct use of percussion instruments, Mozart's audience would have

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[8] Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. & trans. Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller, Harold S. Stone (Cambridge University Press: 1989), 461.
[9] Alain Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court: European Fantasies of the East*, trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso, 1998), 124 & 126.

recognized this music as "Turkish," much like modern audiences would recognize music with a banjo and fiddle as "Appalachian." Analyzing Mozart's use of the *alla turca* style is vital to a close reading of the opera, especially since many of the visual elements of *Die Entführung*, including costumes and set designs, have been lost. We may never know what the audience saw at the opera's premiere, but we know what they heard. Many historians, however, lack the training to incorporate musical analysis into their work. Musicologists, on the other hand, are trained to do this type of analysis, but their studies lack the historian's rigorous textual basis. This thesis, then, will attempt to bridge the gap between these two disciplines, and bring musical analysis into a historical project. By combining the music of the opera, its historical context, and eighteenth-century texts and newspapers, the meanings and uses of Turkish people and themes in Viennese culture can be better discerned.

Across these different forms of media, depictions and commentary on the Turkish religion, government, and harem created the Turks as a despotic people. Burdened by what the Europeans saw as an oppressive religion, a tyrannical government, and an institution that imprisoned love, this view of the Turk emerges. In contrast to this image, the Europeans held up themselves as a free, enlightened people, who enjoyed the benefits of religion without its constraints, lived without fear of their just government, and won the hearts of women with tenderness and passion instead of constraint and cruelty. The despotism of the Turks was the antithesis to European Enlightenment. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said argued that the construction of the East as an antithesis to the West formed a major part of Orientalist thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[10] Though Mozart's opera preceded Said's timeframe, *Die*

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[10] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 1–2.

Entführung participated in a process similar to Said's description: its text and music contributed to the image of the Enlightened European defined via contrast by the despotic Turk. Cultural productions such as *Die Entführung* proved invaluable to Joseph II, as the Emperor attempted to define Austria as an Enlightened nation.

Section I

The Composition and Reception of *Die Entführung*

"You know that I am writing an opera," Mozart wrote to his sister on September 19, 1781, "Those portions which I have finished have won extraordinary applause on all sides. I know this nation—and I have reason to think that my opera will be a success."[11] These words were written by an aspiring young composer, and would ultimately prove correct. *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (The Abduction from the Seraglio) premiered in July of 1782 at Vienna's Burgtheater. It was Mozart's second opera, and the first of his to premier in Vienna. Mozart wrote it during a time of transition in his career, and hoped that the opera would be popular among the Viennese public and potential patrons.[12] To achieve this goal of a popular opera, the composer tapped into specific cultural tropes which he knew would resonate with his audience. He composed the opera with the intent of pleasing the Viennese, and to this end he was successful. The work received a lengthy run and numerous revivals in the Austrian capital, as well as performances throughout the Holy Roman Empire.

Mozart's anticipation and the reality of his Turkish opera's success indicates the popularity of exotic themes in opera at the time. The composer's conscious use of *alla turca* music and Turkish characters, and the resulting popularity of the opera make the work a useful source for analyzing and understanding depictions of Turkish people that resonated with Vienna's urban, middle-class population. Mozart employed certain stereotypes of Turks in the opera to promote Enlightenment ideals. Additionally, the work was composed during the forging

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[11] W.A. Mozart to his sister, September 19, 1781. Trans. & ed. Emily Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and his Family, Volume II* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1966), 766.
[12] Larry Wolff, *The Singing Turk,* 1.

of an anti-Ottoman alliance between Austria and Russia, and the opera's original premier date was planned for the Russian Grand Prince's visit to Vienna. Creating an opera pleasing to the Austrian Emperor's guest would ensure Mozart good standing with Joseph II.

Plot Summary of *Die Entführung*

Since the opera's characters and elements of its plot will be referenced from here on out, a brief summary of *Die Entführung's* plot is necessary to streamline discussion of the opera and avoid confusion. After a rousing overture in the *alla turca* style, the opera begins with the Spanish prince Belmonte outside the palace of the Turkish Pasha Selim. Belmonte declares his resolve to find his beloved Konstanze again in his opening aria. The Pasha's servant Osmin then enters, and Belmonte attempts to question him. Osmin pretends not to hear him and responds only reluctantly and briefly to his questions. The frustrated Belmonte leaves, but not before finding out that his servant Pedrillo is also in the palace.

After a confrontation between Osmin and Pedrillo, Osmin exits and Belmonte enters, reuniting with his servant. Belmonte is informed that Pedrillo, Konstanze, and Konstanze's servant Blonde are safe and treated well, but that the Pasha is attempting to win over Konstanze's heart. Pedrillo then introduces Belmonte to the Pasha, saying that the prince is an architect seeking employment. The Pasha is fooled and takes Belmonte into his service. Later in the garden, Osmin attempts to win over Blonde with threats, but Blonde rebukes him. Selim's advances against Konstanze intensify, and the Pasha also threatens her with torture. She responds with a virtuosic aria, stating that cruelty will never win her heart.

Pedrillo and Belmonte are busy devising their abduction plan, which involves getting Osmin drunk, then whisking the women to safety. The first part of the plan succeeds, and

Pedrillo convinces Osmin to break his Islamic faith and partake in alcohol. The Pasha's servant recovers though, and Belmonte's reunion with Konstanze is cut short. All four Europeans are dragged before the Pasha, where it is revealed that Belmonte's father and Selim are mortal enemies. The Pasha decides to spare his rival's son, believing that it is more noble to repay injury with kindness. The four Europeans are released, and they celebrate Selim's kindness in a grand finale. Osmin, however, is furious at this decision and storms off the stage.

German Opera in Vienna

When Mozart composed *Die Entführung*, two theatrical worlds existed side-by-side in Vienna. One was the world of court-sponsored theater, which operated out of the Burgtheater and the Kärntnertor Theater. Of these two theaters, the Kärntnertor was bigger, but the Burgtheater had a reputation of being closer to the emperor and court.[13] The other theatrical world consisted of suburban theaters operating independently of the court. Of these two worlds, the first offered Mozart the best opportunities for patronage and social advancement, and *Die Entführung* premiered at the Burgtheater on July 16, 1782. Though it was associated with and owned by the court, the Burgtheater was still a public theater, and its audience represented a large swath of Vienna's population. Like a modern theater, the seats were offered at different prices in different sections, and nobles, artists, the middle-class, and rowdy commoners could all find a seat in the hall.[14] The top gallery housed the cheaper seats, for example, while middle class audiences and critics occupied the third floor of boxes (see Fig. 1).

Mozart also arrived in Vienna at a time when the Joseph II was particularly concerned with the language-politics of opera. Though German was the spoken language of Vienna, most of

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[13] Bauman, *W.A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 3.
[14] Ibid, 100.

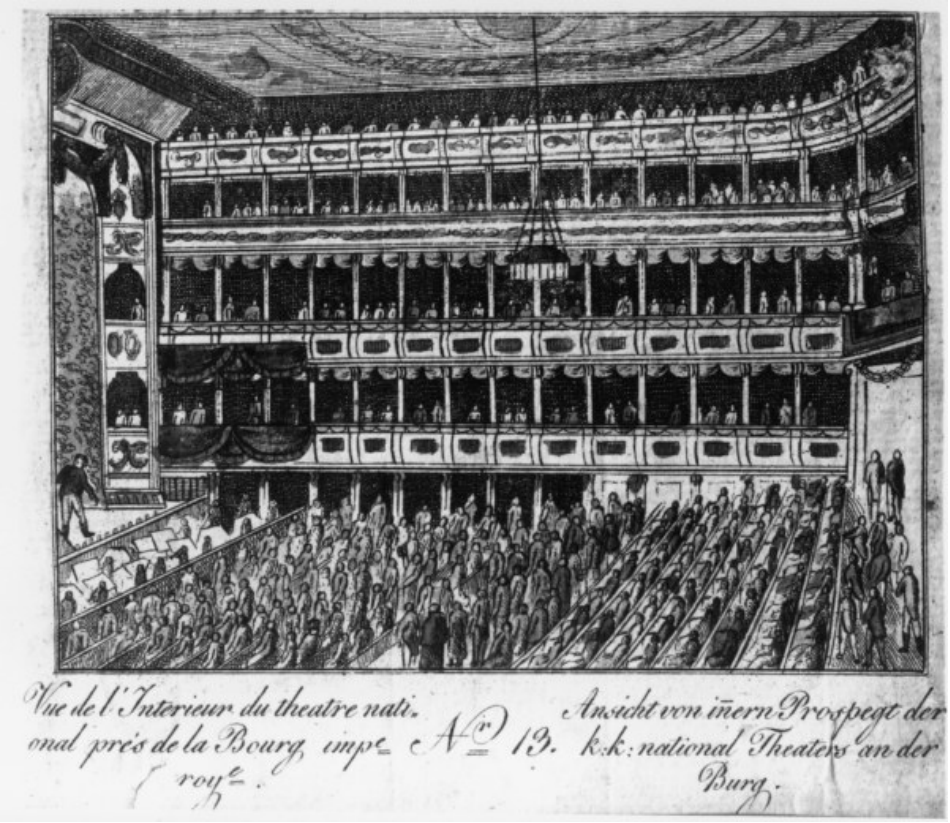

FIG 1:INTERIOR OF THE BURGTHEATER, ANONYMOUS

the city's operas were performed in Italian during the late eighteenth century. Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762) and *Alceste* (1767) had wooed the court of Maria Theresa, and the Antonio Salieri's Italian operas won him a post in the Hapsburg court. The prevalence of Italian operas, however, caused some concern for Joseph II, and he sought to elevate German-language operas. Three years before Mozart arrived in Vienna, the Emperor founded the National Singspiel company, and tasked it with creating German-language operas and singspiels (dramatic works featuring spoken dialogue, musical numbers, and comic elements). Such works had previously existed in Austria, but they were mostly farcical and unsuitable for the emperor's stage.[15] *Die Entführung* was part of this project, and the opera was performed by the singers of the National Singspiel company. The company was ultimately unsuccessful, and it folded in 1783.

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[15] Bauman, *W.A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 4

Nonetheless, *Die Entführung* was well received in Vienna and enjoyed a robust run of performances. Premiering in the court's theater and performed by the Emperor's pet opera company, *Die Entführung* gave Mozart the opportunity to appeal to the court and Joseph. Additionally, the Burgtheater's public audience allowed the opera to reach a broader section of the public.

Mozart and the Creation of a Popular Opera

At the time of *Die Entführung's* composition, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was entering a new phase in his career. Now too old to be paraded around Europe as a child prodigy, he had settled down with his father in Salzburg to work for the Archbishop there. He soon became dissatisfied with his position, however, and sought employment in Vienna. The composer made his frustration with the Archbishop abundantly clear in a letter to his father, in which he stated "I hate the Archbishop to madness."[16] After leaving Salzburg, Mozart had to secure new means of financial security, and *Die Entführung* was his ticket to success in Vienna. With the opera, he hoped to become a prominent composer, as well as performer.[17] The opera was thus composed with the tastes of the Viennese public and prominent noblemen in mind. The exotic setting and *alla turca* music of *Die Entführung* appeared on stage at a time when such music was popular with the public, and the Ottoman Empire occupied the Emperor's attention.

By writing an opera with a Turkish setting and *alla turca* music, Mozart employed a genre popular in Vienna at the time.[18] This was no accident, and Mozart appears to have carefully considered local tastes. "I know this nation," he assured his sister, "and I have reason to

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[16] Mozart to his father, May 9, 1781, in Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and his Family*, 729.
[17] Mozart to his sister, September 19, 1781, in Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and his Family*, 766.
[18] Matthew William Head, *Orientalism, Masquerade and Mozart's Turkish Music* (London: Royal Musical Association, 2000), 53.

think that my opera [*Die Entführung*] will be a success."[19] The composer was confident in the popularity of the *alla turca* style, as well as his ability to appeal to the fad. In a letter to his father, he described the Act I janissary chorus as "short, lively, and written to please the Viennese" and the duet "Vivat Bacchus" as "*per i signori viennisi*" (for the Viennese gentlemen).[20] Both of the pieces referenced are in the *alla turca* style, and Mozart's belief that the Viennese would find them popular indicates his intentional use of Turkish themes and music to create a popular opera.

Mozart had good reason to believe in the popularity of Oriental operas. Two of the National Singspiel company's most-performed operas before the premier of *Die Entführung* were set in the Near East.[21] One of them was a German translation of Gluck's *La rencontre imprévue*, which premiered at the Kärntnertor Theater in 1776 and the Burgtheater in 1780.[22] Gluck and Mozart's operas have remarkably similar plots and settings—both featured a noble prince and his comic servant attempting to rescue multiple women (one of whom is the prince's beloved) from the harem of a Middle-Eastern nobleman. Gluck's operas were quite popular in Vienna at the time, and the directors of the Burgtheater demonstrated their preference for his works by delaying the premier of Mozart's opera to make way for Gluck's *Iphegenie in Tauris* and *Alceste*.[23] Originally, Mozart's opera was to be premiered for the Grand Duke of Russia as part of a visit solidifying an alliance between the Austrian and Russian empires, which will be discussed later. Mozart was still a relative unknown, and so the Burgtheater direction made a safe choice by

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[19] Mozart to his sister, September 19, 1781, in Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and his Family*, 766.
[20] Mozart to his father, September 26, 1781, in Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and his Family*, 769–70. It is unclear why the second quotation is in Italian, probably a joke on the composer's part.
[21] Bauman, *W.A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 10.
[22] Alfred Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera 1597–1940* (London: John Calder, 1978), column 275.
[23] Mozart to his father, October 6, 1781, in Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and his Family*, 771–2.

deferring to the established Gluck. The long run of shows enjoyed by *La rencontre*, and the opera house's decision to show two other Gluck's operas for an important diplomatic visit demonstrate the wisdom of Mozart: by composing a work similar to one of Vienna's most popular operas by its most popular composer, Mozart attempted to win over the city.

As mentioned previously, Mozart evoked the Turk in the opera's music as well as its setting. Multiple pieces in the opera (including the two which Mozart wrote explicitly to please the Viennese) are in the *alla turca* musical style. This style symbolized the Turks for contemporary audiences, yet bore little resemblance to authentic Turkish music.[24] Mozart did not invent the *alla turca* style, and could draw from several prominent composers for inspiration. Hungarian musicologist Bence Szabolcsi identified Joseph Haydn, Michael Haydn, and Gluck as possible influences on *Die Entführung's* "Turkish" music.[25] The connection with Gluck has already been mentioned, and the similarities between his *La rencontre* and Mozart's opera are musical as well as narrative. The overtures for both operas feature similar instrumentation—a standard classical orchestra bolstered by piccolos and cymbals— fluctuations between soft and loud, and driving, march-like rhythms. In short, both are in the *alla turca* style, and given the popularity of *La rencontre*, it is no surprise that Mozart imitated the musical style of the older composer.

The premier of *Die Entführung* also occurred during an important decade in Hapsburg-Ottoman relations. During the early 1780s, *alla turca* enjoyed renewed popularity in Vienna as the city prepared for the centennial commemoration of the 1683 Turkish siege. Bands played *alla turca* music in open-air concerts, including at the Prater, a large and popular park near the

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[24] Meyer, "Turquerie and Eighteenth-Century Music," 483.
[25] Bence Szabolcsi, "Exoticisms in Mozart," *Music & Letters* 37, no. 4 (October 1956): 328–9.

Danube.[26] Mozart's opera premiered just a year before the official centennial, and he could have drawn inspiration from these concerts while exploiting the trend for Ottoman music. Wolff also suggests that *Die Entführung's* plot served as a way to commemorate the defeat of the Turks.[27] This analysis seems particularly apt when applied to the character of Osmin. He begins the opera full of bluster and haughtiness, threatening the Europeans with torture.[28] By the end of the opera, however, he is completely defeated. The Pasha strips Osmin of his slave-girl Blonde and deprives him the pleasure of torturing his European rivals. Osmin is unable to contain his rage during the finale and he storms off the stage, just as the defeated and humiliated Turks retreated from Vienna in 1683.

The 1683 siege was not the only military encounter with the Turks present in the minds of the Viennese; *Die Entführung's* initial premiere date also coincided with the Grand Duke Paul of Russia's visit to Vienna following Russia's victory agains the Turks and subsequent annexation of Crimea. This visit solidified an anti-Ottoman alliance between the two empires, one which would be called into battle during the Austro-Turkish war of 1788. As previously mentioned, the premier was delayed, and two Gluck operas were performed for the Grand Duke instead. Nonetheless, a spirit of commemoration for the recent defeat of the Turks at the hands of Austria's ally entered into Viennese comic operas, *Die Entführung* included. The occasion of Russia's recent victory coincided with celebration over Austria's ancient victory, strengthening the views of the Ottomans as weakened power.[29] By portraying the Turkish characters—

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[26] Wolff, *The Singing Turk*, 154.
[27] Wolff, *The Singing Turk*, 147.
[28] Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, "Solche hergelauf'ne Laffen," 85–9
[29] Wolff, *The Singing Turk*, 147. For more detailed information on Russia's victories over the Ottomans in the eighteenth century, see Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700–1922*, 40.

especially Osmin—as the villains, doomed to defeat, Mozart celebrated the victories of Austria and her allies over the cowed Ottomans. In doing so, he appealed to the Austrian Emperor, hoping to gain favor by applauding his new-found friendship with Russia against their common foe.

The Success of *Die Entführung*

Mozart's efforts to create a popular opera were rewarded, and *Die Entführung* was a success. In a letter to his father from July 20, 1782—shortly after the July 16 premiere—Mozart reported on the opera's good reception, though apparently some detractors hissed during its second performance.[30] Nonetheless, the opera continued to be performed in Vienna, and eventually the Russian Grand Prince was treated to a performance.[31] The opera also found success outside of Vienna, and it's popularity is apparent in the number of cities in which it was performed. Bauman recorded performances in almost all the major cities of the Germanic world, from Strasbourg to Riga.[32] The *alla turca* music, exotic setting, and timely portrayal of defeated Turks resonated with audiences in Vienna and throughout the Holy Roman Empire, and these audiences demanded performances.

The opera was also popular with theater critics, who praised especially the musical qualities of the opera. They verified Mozart's claims of popularity among the Viennese. Writing in the *Magazin der Musik*, Carl Cramer reported that "it exceeded the public's expectations, and the author's good taste and ravishing new ideas received loud and universal applause."[33] Though

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[30] Mozart to his father, July 20, 1782. In Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and his Family*, 807.
[31] Bauman, *W.A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 102.
[32] Ibid, 103.
[33] Carl Friedrich Cramer, *Magazin der Musik*, Vol. I (Hamburg: Der Musikalischen Niederlage, 1783), 352. "Sie übertraf die Erwartung des Publicums, und des Verfassers Geschmack und neue Ideen, die hinreissend waren, erhielten den lautesten und allgemeinsten Beyfal."

he was working with familiar *alla turca* motifs and signifiers, Mozart's opera was exceptional in that the *alla turca* music was "integrated" with the broader musical language.[34] Rather than being reserved for just the overture and a few comic numbers (as in *La rencontre*), *alla turca* music appears throughout the *Die Entführung*, and in the overture and finale, Mozart alternated between *alla turca* and standard operatic musical styles. As Cramer's review notes, this strategy was well received by audiences in Vienna. Even when writers criticized other aspects of the opera, they still reserved praise for the music. A review in the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* proclaimed that the opera had "exceptionally good songs," yet felt that the libretto was lacking.[35] Mozart's innovative and expanded use of *alla turca* music left a favorable impression on audiences and critics, even if they found some faults in the opera.

Mozart intentionally filled *Die Entführung* with *alla turca* music in order to appeal to Viennese audiences. His success indicates that he successfully read his audience, and the Turkish characters and music resonated with them. They recognized the cymbals, triangle, and piccolo of the overture as representing the Turks, Osmin as the "cruel Turk" character type, and the harem rescue narrative device. Mozart did not come up with these motifs by himself—he observed them in other operas (like *La rencontre*) or perhaps unconsciously absorbed them from broader Viennese society. Given the composer's intent, careful attention to Viennese cultural, and the warm reception which met this work, *Die Entführung* becomes a valuable artifact to uncover ideas and preconceptions about the Turk, especially in relation to the European. The rest of this thesis will address these individual conceptions, drawing parallels between the opera and other sources from the time.

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[34] Bauman, *W.A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 65.
[35] "Fragmente aus Wiener Briefen," *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* 40 (October 5, 1782): 627.

Section II

Despotism and the Muslim Ban on Alcohol

"Muhammed…has more important things to do, than to bother with your glass of wine," the European servant Pedrillo says to Osmin in Act II of *Die Entführung*.[36] Overall, Mozart mentioned the religious differences between the European and Turkish characters sparingly in his opera, yet in this passage they are laid bare. Pedrillo makes this remark to convince Osmin to break the Islamic ban on alcohol and partake in a glass of wine. To the modern viewer, it may seem odd that, in the one scene centered around religion, Mozart focused on a seemingly minor difference between the two faiths. Yet the Islamic ban on alcohol appears in numerous German sources from the late eighteenth century, often as a source of ridicule or humor. Mentions of the ban are part of a longer tradition of emphasizing the religious differences between Europeans and Turks. The Hungarians viewed their struggle for independence against the Ottomans as a religious struggle as much as a political one.[37] The Hapsburgs were also eager to frame their struggle with the Ottomans in religious terms and gain recognition as defenders of Christendom. After the Turks retreated from Vienna in 1683, the whole continent of Europe—Protestant and Catholic alike—celebrated the Hapsburg regime.[38] By equating the Ottomans with Islam and themselves with Christianity, the Austrian emperors increased their standing among European monarchs.

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[36] Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail,* 254. "Mahomet…hat nötiger zu tun, als sich um diene Fläsche Wein zu kümmern."

[37] Paula Sutter Fichtner, *Terror and Toleration: The Hapsburg Empire Confronts Islam, 1526–1850* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2008), 11.

[38] Ibid

This conflation continued after the 1683 siege, and well into the eighteenth century, the terms Muslim and Turk were used interchangeably. For example, a poem from a collection of war songs published during the 1788 Austro-Turkish War refers to the Emperor Joseph II descending on the Turkish enemy. The poem celebrates that "the German avenger is upon the insolent Muslims," referring to the Ottomans by their religion rather than their ethnicity or dynasty.[39] In the Turkish operas of this century, composers accompanied mentions of Islamic beliefs with *alla turca* music, reinforcing the inseparability of "Muslim" and "Turk." Both Mozart's *Die Entführung* (1782) and Gluck's *La rencontre imprévue* (1764) employ this trope, bringing in the instruments and styles that define the *alla turca* style when evoking the Turkish characters' religion.

Alain Grosrichard offered a possible explanation for this tendency to connect the Turks with their religion. In his book *The Sultan's Court: European Fantasies of the Far East*, Grosrichard argued that many Enlightenment writers saw an inextricable link between Islam and despotism.[40] By emphasizing the Islamic beliefs of his Turkish characters, Mozart drew on these existing cultural tropes. The specific commandment of Islam to which he devoted the most text and music was the ban on alcohol, specifically the ban on wine. Gluck also wrote an aria around the ban. Mentions of the ban existed outside of opera as well, and one of the war songs from the 1788 collection mentions it. In all three cases, the ban is seen as oppressive and unjust by muslim characters, and either they break it themselves or witness a fellow Muslim doing so. Mozart,

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[39] Joseph Hraschankzy, *Oesterreichische und türksiche Kreigeslierder* (Vienna: Joseph Hraschanzky, 1788), 7. "Und an der frechen Moselmim/ Der Deutsche Rächer ist."
[40] Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court*, 88–89.

Gluck, and the author of the war songs cast the ban as arbitrary, reinforcing the view of Islam as an instrument of despotism, and therefore the Muslim Turks as a despotic people.

Mentions of the Ban

As stated above, references to Islam appear infrequently in *Die Entführung*. Osmin incorporates the Prophet Muhammed in various swears, but Selim does not once mention any aspects of the Muslim faith. There is, however, one musical number centered on the differences between Islam and Christianity. Nestled in the middle of Act II, the duet "Vivat Bacchus" exploits and plays with the Islamic ban on alcohol for comedic effect. In this duet and the preceding spoken dialogue, Pedrillo convinces Osmin to drink wine in order to inebriate the Pasha's servant and allow the women to escape. This song contains multiple references to Islam: Pedrillo mocks the ban and suggests that the Prophet Muhammed was wrong to create it,[41] and Osmin worries about Allah seeing and punishing him for the offense.[42] Despite his initial misgivings, Osmin concedes, and together, the two servants sing in praise of wine and women. Pedrillo is ultimately successful in his goal, and Osmin falls into a drunken stupor.

This duet mirrors an episode in C.W. Gluck's comic opera *La rencontre imprévue* (1763). *Die Entführung* owes much to this earlier opera: both feature an oriental setting, a tenor-hero attempting to rescue his beloved from a harem, and an ultimately magnanimous eastern despot, to name a few. Gluck's opera takes place in Egypt, and follows the prince Ali's attempt to find and recover his lost lover Reza. He is assisted by his servant Osmin, and Reza has three servants of her own. The work overall is less musically sophisticated than *Die Entführung*, and in

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[41] Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 254. "Wahrhaftig, da hat euer Vater Mahomet einen verzweifelten Bock geschossen, daß er euch den Wein verboten hat."
[42] Ibid, 257. "ob's wohl Allah sehen kann?"

particular the *alla turca* style is not as developed or distinct as in Mozart's opera. There are, however, moments of clear *alla turca* music, most notably in a scene from which "Vivat Bacchus" seems to be partially inspired. In the scene in question, a dervish and caravan master (both Muslim) secretly enjoy a cask of sherry. The caravan master then sings an aria ("Mahomet notre grand prophète") deploring that his faith prohibits alcohol, proclaiming "our great prophet Muhammed / did not have a clear head / when he forbid wine."[43] The two characters are both cautious to avoid detection, but otherwise display no reservations about disobeying Muhammed's command. Despite the twenty years separating the two works, scenes in which Muslim characters drink alcohol remained a valid trope for operatic composers.

This trope also appeared in non-operatic contexts. Five years after the premier of *Die Entführung* and 104 years after the Siege of Vienna, Austria once again fought a war against the Ottomans. This military action inspired one Viennese publisher to compile a book of patriotic poems titled *Oesterreichische und türkische Kriegeslieder* (Austrian and Turkish War Songs). The title suggests a collection of songs from both Austria and Turkey, but given that they are all in German, it seems unlikely that the "türkische" poems are of actual Turkish origin. A subscriber list at the beginning of the text indicates that this collection of poems was distributed among a middle-class audience of men and women. Among the subscribers were a professor of Greek languages, a doctor, and an official of the imperial library.[44] These educated professionals

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[43] Lionel Salter, English libretto to accompany Christoph Willibald Gluck, *La Rencontre Imprévue ou les Pélerins de la Mecque*, with Julie Kaufmann and the Munich Radio Orchestra, conducted by Leopold Hager, Orfeo, 110. "Mahomet, notre grand prophète / n'avait pas la cervelle nette / quand il a défendu le vin."

[44] Hraschankzy, *Oesterreichische und türkische Kriegeslieder*, frontmatter. The publisher of the war songs utilized the *Pränumeration* business model, where subscribers would pre-order a discounted copy of the book, allowing the publisher to cover some of the costs of production before the first printing.

also formed part of the opera-going audience in the late eighteenth century, and it is likely that some of these subscribers had seen *Die Entführung* five years earlier.

Given the overlap in audiences, it comes as no surprise that the war songs presented a similar image of the Turk as *Die Entführung*. On the subject of Muslim's drinking, the collection echoes Mozart's "Vivat Bacchus"—particularly in one song titled "Klage eines Türken in der Gefangenschaft" (Lament of a Turk in Captivity). In this song, a Turkish prisoner laments that the Prophet Muhammed has seemingly abandoned him, despite the captive's piety and strict observance of Islam. A few stanzas in, the captive evokes the ban on wine. He exclaims "And then, how faithfully / I abandoned wine / Which my Imam, unobserved / And unpunished often drank!"[45] In a footnote attached to this stanza, the editor explained that "Muhammed forbade his true believers from partaking in wine," but that this ban is widely ignored by the Islamic spiritual authorities, and "When they were alone, almost all the clergy (their chief, the Grand Mufti, included) secretly violated this law."[46] The passage and its accompanying footnote accuse the heads of the Islamic faith of hypocrisy, and by doing so attack the statute itself: if not even the imams and Grand Mufti are following this law, it is clearly arbitrary.

The three drinking episodes can be seen as emphasizing the lawless nature of the Turk (a topic explored further in Chapter III). Turks were often portrayed as unruly, disobeying their superiors and pursuing their own interests. Osmin, the caravan master, and the Imams in the war song fit into this stereotype: all break a religious law to indulge in the pleasures of alcohol. The

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[45] Hraschankzy, *Oesterreichische und türkische Kriegeslieder* (Vienna: Joseph Hraschanzky, 1788), 25. "Und dann, wie so gewissenhaft, / Verlast' ich mir den Rebensaft, / Mit dem mein Imam, unbelauscht / Und ungestraft, sich oft berauscht!"

[46] Ibid. "Mahomet verbietet den Rechtgläubigen den Gebrauch des Weines. Allein fast alle ihre Geistliche (ihr Oberhaupt, den Mufti selbst, nicht ausgenommen) übertreten heimlich dieses Gesetz…"

mentions of the ban can also be seen as attacks on religious law in general. The alcohol ban imposed strict controls on individuals' private lives, a serious offense to Enlightened thinkers and rulers. Mocking the ban was therefore an implicit support for the reduction of Church power—an important part of Joseph II's program of reforms.

Islam as a Despotic Religion

When Gluck, Mozart, and the war songs discussed Islam, they carried with them a series of assumptions on the nature of the religion, particularly its relation to despotism. These assumptions were expressed clearly by the Baron de Montesquieu in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748). Montesquieu argued that Islam was incompatible with good governance, and Muslim rulers could only rule despotically and cruelly. Christianity was founded on love, while Islam was founded on violence, and as a result "The Mohammedan religion, which speaks only with a sword, continues to act on men with the destructive spirit that founded it."[47] A Christian prince's religion allows him to act with benevolence and kindness towards his subjects, while a Muslim prince can act only with violence. Later in the chapter, Montesquieu offered an ecumenical view on the various branches of Christianity, arguing that they each have their own strengths and weaknesses. This tolerance did not extend to Islam, and he made it very clear which faith was preferable.

None of the works mentioned above launched full-scale critiques of Islam; such a project would be better suited for a philosophical treatise than an opera or song. They all, however, launch a more subtle attack on Islam through the ban on wine. By mentioning the ban and showing how eagerly the Muslims break it, they label Islam as despotic and its followers as

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[47] Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 462.

unwilling, repressed subjects. In the two operas, the Muslim characters clearly resent the doctrine and have few qualms in breaking it. Osmin is easily convinced by his enemy to drink the wine, and the caravan master and dervish in *La rencontre* need no convincing to partake. These scenes emphasize the Muslim characters' desire to drink wine, deny the effectiveness of the ban, and ridicule the concept of religious laws in general. Neither Osmin nor the dervish are divinely punished for breaking the ban, and drinking the wine seems to improve both of their moods.

Mozart and Gluck denied the sinfulness of alcohol, and both constructed the ban (and by extension, the whole Islamic religion) as a tool for despotism. Osmin and the dervish were not concerned about committing a sin, but rather getting caught by the authorities. Before the music begins in "Vivat Bacchus," Osmin warned Pedrillo not to tell anyone.[48] Afterwards, he repeated this request, but this time his speech is marred by the wine: "but you must not give me away—brother—give me away—because—if Muhammed—no, no—if the Pasha knew…"[49] By initially worrying about Muhammed before correcting himself to worrying about the Pasha, Osmin demonstrated that it was not the religious consequences he feared, but the social. The episode in *La rencontre* followed a similar script, and the caravan master must assure the dervish that no one will witness their transgression and report them to the authorities.[50] They did not fear punishment from Allah or Muhammed, but from their rulers.

These instances support an eighteenth-century European theory identified by Grosrichard on the relationship between religious and worldly authority in the Islamic courts. Grosrichard asserted that Europeans viewed Islam as a tool of the sultan and imams, who feigned adherence

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[48] Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 254.
[49] Ibid, 268. "Aber verraten mußt du mich nicht—Brüderchen—verraten—denn—wenn's Mahomet—nein, nein—der Bassa wüßte…"
[50] Salter, *La Rencontre Imprévue*, 109.

to religious codes while using them to augment their despotic power.[51] Osmin, the caravan master, and the dervish feared being caught more than sinning. For this reason, Osmin fears the Pasha more than Muhammed. The "Lament of a Turk in Captivity" also supports this view, and asserts that the imams secretly flaunted the Islamic code while demanding strict obedience from the common people. The footnote explicitly states that the Islamic clergy did not obey the ban on wine. The depiction of the ban in the war songs and the operas reinforce the view that the ban was not a matter of faith, but a tool of control and despotism. Such depictions would have resonated with the educated audiences for the three works, and reinforced Enlightenment beliefs about Islam and religion in general.

Connecting Islam and Turkishness

The operas and war songs were not solely concerned with criticizing Islam. They also spent considerable effort connecting Islam with the Turks, and by extension Turks with despotism. Mozart, Gluck, and the war songs asserted an interchangeability between the Turkish ethnicity and the Islamic religion. Musically, Mozart and Gluck employed the *alla turca* style during their drinking scenes, evoking the Turk with the orchestra while the libretto evoked Islam. The war songs asserted the interchangeability of "Turk" and "Muslim" textually by treating the two identities as synonyms. The operas and the war songs thus indicate that the Ottoman's ethnicity and religion were closely linked in the European mind: "Turk" as an identity could not exist outside of the Islamic faith, but this very faith acted as an instrument of despotism, limiting the Turk's freedom

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[51] Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court*, 91–92.

Mozart made his intention to compose "Vivat Bacchus" in the *alla turca* style explicitly clear In a letter to his father dated September 26, 1781. The composer described this duet as "consist[ing] entirely of *my Turkish tattoo*," a rather cryptic phrase which seems to imply that he viewed *alla turca* as a signature of sorts.[52] The musical characteristics of this piece fit nicely into the eighteenth-century German writer and musician C.F.D. Schubart's definition of "Die türkische Musik" from his book *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (Ideas for an aesthetic of sound-art). In this text, the author described the musical situations in the major cities of Europe, and the various instruments of the orchestra. His discussion of "türkische Musik" is part of the latter section. The main instruments of Turkish music, according to Schubart, were shawms, cymbals, and drums.[53] Mozart substituted piccolos for shawms, and bulked up the standard classical orchestra with an expanded percussion section of bass drum, cymbals, and triangles. Additionally, this duet fits the metrical and tonal requirements set forth in Schubart's *Ideen*. Mozart wrote the duet in the key of F major, which Schubart identified as the favorite key of the Turks.[54] It is also in 2/4 time, which Schubart believed was the only time signature the Turks used.[55]

Mozart used the *alla turca* style in multiple scenes, including the janissary chorus and Osmin's aria "Solche hergelauf'ne Laffen," both in Act I. For most of the opera, Mozart employed this style to emphasize Selim's power and Osmin's cruelty, with the janissary chorus accomplishing the former, and "Solche herfelauf'ne Laffen" the latter. Both of these purposes

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[52] Mozart to his father, September 26, 1781. In Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and His Family,* 768.
[53] C.F.D. Schubart, *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (Vienna: J.V. Degen, 1806), 331.
[54] Ibid, 332. "Fdur, und Bdur, scheinen die Lieblingstöne die Türken zu seyn." In German, "dur" is used to signify a major key, while "moll" is used to signify minor.
[55] Ibid. "Sie liebt bloss der zweyviertels Tact."

arose from common views of Turks in Vienna at the time. At first glance, "Vivat Bacchus" does not perform either of these functions. When placed in conversation with the eighteenth-century discourse on Islam, however, its inclusion in the opera becomes clearer. It simultaneously mocks what Europeans saw as the irrational and overbearing rules of Islam, while also connecting this religion to the Turks.

"Lament of a Turk in Captivity" conflates Turks and Islam in a more subtle manner. The song contains no mentions of Turkish culture, and consists entirely of references to Islam. The reader is aware by the title and context that the narrator is Turkish, but without these indicators the singer's ethnicity is entirely ambiguous. The footnote attached to the stanza on wine also serves to conflate "Muslim" and "Turk." It provides a definition of "imam," describing them as "Turkish priests," though imams are found throughout the Muslim world.[56] The interchangeability of the identifiers went both ways. Just as "Muslim" could be used to signify "Turk," the reverse was also true.

The techniques of the *alla turca* style also mark Gluck's "Mahomet notre grand phrophète:" a piccolo and drum are introduced, and it is written in 2/4 time. Gluck used the style more sparingly, and it is only apparent in the overture, the dervish's opening song, and "Mahomet notre grand prophète." The appearance of any *alla turca* music in this opera seems unusual, as *La rencontre* is set in Egypt, not Turkey. Gluck, however, seemed to have no qualms conflating Turks with Muslims, and the composition of this tune in the *alla turca* style is indicative of the attitude apparent in the war songs. Turks were inseparable from their Islamic faith, and Islam was likewise inseparable from the Turkish ethnicity. The shawms and drums of

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[56] Hraschankzy, *Oesterreichische und türkische Kriegeslieder*, 25. "Imam, ein türkischer Priester."

the janissary bands were suitable not just for representing Turkish Muslims, but for representing all Muslims.

The three drinking episodes all operated under the same set of assumptions: they assumed that Muslims resented the ban and that it was widely broken (even by the religious authorities), and they assumed a synonymity between "Muslim" and "Turk." The first assumption was based in Enlightenment theories of Islam's intrinsic despotism. As exhibited by Montesquieu, Islam and liberty were defined as antithetical to one other, and the nature of the religion itself made it susceptible to despotism. The second assumption linked the Turkish people to this religious despotism, which augmented the tyranny attributed to the Ottoman sultanate. In the view of Europeans, the Turk was subjugated and oppressed by both his government and his religion, two burdens that were not easily shed.

It should also be noted that *Die Entführung* and the war songs were published during the reign of Joseph II, a monarch famous for his attacks on Catholic institutions. In his description of Vienna, eighteenth century author Johann Pezzl wrote favorably about the Emperor's reduction of the monasteries. He cited Montesquieu, and described the monasteries as institutions of degeneracy, where the strict rules of cloistered life warped the monks' natural passions and desires.[57] Pezzl viewed religious bans on sources of pleasure as negative influences on men. Given that he attributes this view to a prominent writer like Montesquieu, it is reasonable to assume that a similar logic was at work in mentions of the Islamic ban on alcohol. Not only were religious bans viewed as tools of despotism, they were also sources of degeneracy. By mocking the ban on alcohol, Mozart, Gluck, and the war songs supported Joseph's attack on outdated

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[57] H.C. Robbins Landon, *Mozart and Vienna* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), 58.

religious institutions. The Austrian Emperor saved his people from despotism and unnatural desires caused by strict religious bans, while the Ottoman Emperor performed no such service for his subjects.

Section III

The Ottoman Government and Despotism

Mozart and his contemporaries did not attribute the Ottomans' despotism solely to Islam's religious rules, but also to the conduct of the Turkish rulers and government officials. Mozart composed *Die Entführung* during a period of liberalizing reform in the Austrian government. Many of the programs initiated by Maria Theresa were continued by Joseph II, including loosening church power, rolling back feudalism, and reforming the criminal justice system. As the Hapsburg rulers implemented their Enlightenment agenda, Austrian writers and composers began looking at the Ottoman leadership with an increasingly critical eye, and the Ottoman sultan was no longer seen as powerful, but cruel and ineffective. Pashas and sultans were fond of torture and harsh punishment in these portrayals, and criticized for such tendencies. These portrayals of Turks were used by eighteenth-century writers and artists to endorse Joseph's program of reform.

Not only were the Turkish rulers seen as needlessly cruel, but their subjects were also portrayed as unruly. As the previous chapter argued, composers and writers often showed their Turkish characters disobeying religious rules. This disobedience applied also to secular laws. Austrian newspapers and operas created Turks who were ungovernable and a threat to "civilized" Europeans who entered Ottoman territory. By criticizing the supposed cruelty of the Turkish rulers, they implicitly praised Joseph's mercy. Similarly, portraying Turkish subjects as unruly argued that the Turkish government was ineffective at controlling its citizens. Europeans, however, were portrayed as well-mannered and law-abiding, arguing for the effectiveness of Enlightened government in creating good citizens. Just as Joseph's loosening of church power

saved his people from degeneracy, his relaxation of state power saved his people from lawlessness.

Insubordination and Lawlessness

Though the term "despotism" may evoke images of an all-powerful ruler, the Turkish despots of the eighteenth century were often depicted as ineffective at keeping order within their realms. In European depictions of sultans and pashas, the Turkish nobles' servants were often disobedient, and both newspaper reporters and libretto writers depicted a piracy problem in the Eastern Mediterranean. Portraying the sultan's subjects as unruly allowed Europeans to attack the despotic Ottoman government, and argue that despite the powers invested in the sultan, he failed to effectively command his subjects. Depicting Turks as unruly also strengthened stereotypes of the Turks as cruel, and therefore ungovernable. By depicting the Ottoman government as ineffective, German writers validated the Enlightened rulership of European monarchs like Joseph II and the superior rationality of the European populace.

Piracy played a key role in the plot of *Die Entführung*: Pedrillo, Blonde, and Konstanze were sold to the Pasha by pirates in the Mediterranean, setting up all the dramatic action of the opera. Ottoman piracy also had a religious dimension, and only non-Muslims could legally be enslaved within the Empire, making Christians prime targets for piracy.[58] Stories of Europeans being abducted by Turkish pirates thus took on undertones of religious conflict, adding to their appeal and popularity. Mozart's piracy plot had many precedents, both from previous operas set in the Middle-East (such as *La rencontre imprévue*) and news reports from the time. Many

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[58] Joshua M. White, "Piracy of the Ottoman Mediterranean: Slave Laundering and Subjecthood," in *The Making of the Modern Mediterranean: Views from the South*, ed. Judith Tucker (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 96.

reports from the *Reichspost Reuter*—an eighteenth-century German-language newspaper—warned of the precarious maritime situation around the Turkish coast. One such report from February 11, 1778 warned of piracy around Crete, which was at the time controlled by the Ottomans. The newspaper recounted the story of a French frigate confronting a Turkish pirate ship.[59] The Turkish ship had previously raided French merchant ships and confiscated their wares. This report emphasized the need for Europeans to protect their own interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. It implied that the Ottoman navy could not be trusted to control piracy, and only the intervention of a French frigate saved the French merchants from further raiding. Relations between the Austrians and the Ottomans remained tense during the last half of the eighteenth century, and depicting the Turkish seas as dangerous validated future military interventions or wars in the region.

A slightly earlier *Reichspost* article went so far as to condemn the Turkish navy, combining depictions of insubordinate Turks with the threat of piracy. In a report from January 27, 1778, a scuffle arose between a French and Ottoman ship near the isle of Rhodes. According to the article, a Turkish marine harassed two French sailors who were sent to the island to find provisions. After the French captain sent help for his sailors, the Turkish captain boarded the French ship and "not only abusively bound and beat the captain, but also cut down the French flag and tossed it into the sea."[60] The article placed the blame for this altercation squarely on the Turks. Due to their aggressive and irrational behavior, the article suggested, the encounter

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[59] *Reichspost Reuter,* February 11, 1778, "…eine Franszösische Fregatte, die Sardelle genannt, eine Candiotische schebecke, welche dem Mauthner soll gehörig gewesen seyn, und nebst vielen andern Waaren 2000 Centner Seife am Bord hatte, in Grund geschossen habe." Candiotische translates to Candian, an antiquated name for Crete.

[60] *Reichspost Reuter*, January 27, 1778, "…nicht allein den Capitain desselben sehr mishandelten banden, und entsetzlich prügelten, sondern auch die Französische Flagge zerrissen und die stücke derselben ins Meer warfen."

between the French and Turkish sailors turned violent. The line between Turkish marines and pirates was blurred in the minds of Europeans, a perception fueled by reports of Turkish governors supporting pirates and slavers in the seventeenth century.[61] A century later, these narratives continued to effect perceptions of the Ottoman government. Piracy was connected to the poor governance of the Turkish officials and the cruelty and unruliness of the Turkish sailors.

In Osmin, Mozart constructed an operatic counterpart to the unruly Turks in the news. Osmin is a disloyal servant, more swayed by his passions and emotions than the commands of the Pasha, just as the Turkish marines acted out of cruelty instead of official orders. Osmin first exhibited his unruliness at the end of Act I, when he refused to allow Belmonte and Pedrillo to enter the Pasha's palace. Pedrillo—himself a servant of the Pasha—introduced Belmonte to Selim as a European architect. The Pasha was deceived, and took the Spanish prince into his service. When the pair of Europeans attempt to enter the palace, Osmin dismisses Selim's orders. "The Pasha is soft like butter, and with him you can do as you please," he begins, "but I am not so gullible."[62] He insulted the Pasha's judgements, believing he was more intelligent and perceptive than his master. In this case, he was right, since Belmonte was no architect. However, instead of advising Selim against such a move, he disobeyed his superior's orders in order to impede Pedrillo. Mozart created Osmin as a selfish servant, more interested in pursuing his personal rivalry with Blonde's lover than in assisting his master.

Mozart manifested Osmin's insubordination in a dramatic episode during the opera's finale. After Selim announces that Pedrillo and Blonde can go free, Osmin is incredulous.

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[61] White, "Piracy of the Ottoman Mediterranean," 98.
[62] Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 132. "Der Bassa ist weich wie Butter, mit dem könnt ihr machen, was ihr wollt; aber ich habe eine feine Nase."

"What!" he exclaims, "Will [Pedrillo] take my Blonde with him?"[63] Again, the servant placed his own desires and emotions above his master's commands. He is not reconciled during the opera, and in the finale, he breaks away from the other characters in a fit of rage. At this point, Selim had shown himself to be a magnanimous ruler, so Mozart does not seem to have placed the blame for Osmin's insubordination on his master's despotism. Rather, Osmin's own tendency towards cruelty made him ungovernable. As he storms off, the *alla turca* music from his aria "Solche hergelauf'ne Laffen" returns. This further connects Osmin's cruelty to his ethnicity: he is ungovernable because he is cruel, and he is cruel because he is Turkish. Even the Enlightened beneficence that Selim adopts at the end of the opera could not constrain Osmin's wild passions, just as the Turkish government could not, in the eyes Europeans, restrain its cruel, Turkish subjects.

Torture and Punishment

This supposed cruelty that Austrians believed made Turks hard to govern was also reflected in depictions of the Turkish government. A report from the *Reichspost Reuter* pointed at two instances of cruelty in the Ottoman government, and for most of *Die Entführung*, Selim joins Osmin in threatening the Europeans with torture. The Turkish rulers in the newspaper and opera seem were constructed from Montesquieu's conception of despotic government. For him, the guiding principle of despotic government was fear.[64] A despot (like the Turkish sultan) derived his power from the fearful obedience of his subjects, which would be maintained by tortures and executions. Maria Theresa and Joseph II, however, were not seen as despots, but Enlightened

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[63] Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 396. "Wie! Meine Blonde soll er auch mitnehmen?"
[64] Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws,* 28. On this same page, Montesquieu uses the Turkish sultan as an example of a despot.

monarchs. They abolished the use of torture for most crimes and reformed the criminal code of the Austrian Empire during their reigns. Depictions of Ottoman governmental cruelty defined this contrast between the supposed despotism of the Turks and the Enlightened rule of the Hapsburgs. Additionally, the Turkish government was often cast in a negative light, serving to promote the Emperor's actions and his Enlightened regime.

German newspapers during the late eighteenth century perpetuated the trope of the cruel Turk, and reports the Ottoman Empire emphasized the perceived harshness of the Turkish justice system. One such report appeared in the June 1, 1780 issue of the *Reichspost Reuter*. The paper opened with an article from Istanbul dated April 17, 1780 which reported that "Although the Ottomans—due to contact with many civilized nations—think otherwise, the swift execution of justice in the Turkish empire is still in full strength, as revealed by both of the following incidents."[65] The first "incident" involved three people executed for disobeying the grand vizier's orders.[66] The article stated that "The grand vizier had forbidden the killing of any lambs before the determined time, which was the fifth of the coming month."[67] The reporter did not explain the significance of May 5, though it may have some religious significance. Whether or not the paper's writers and readers knew this is impossible to determine, but they would have seen the ban either as another harsh religious mandate, or arbitrary. Additionally, the punishment for slaughtering sheep on this date was decapitation, a punishment no Austrian was likely to face, even for serious crimes. This article therefore presented three citizens of the Ottoman Empire

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[65] *Reichspost Reuter*, June 1, 1780, 1. "Daß die schleunige Rechtspflege im Türkischen Reiche noch in voller Kraft ist, obgleich die Ottomannen durch den Umgang mit gesittetere Nationen in vielen Stöcken anders denken, als vorhin, erhellet aus folgenden beyden Vorfällen."

[66] The grand vizier was the head of government in the Ottoman Empire, who took over more responsibilities from the sultan as the eighteenth century progressed.

[67] *Reichspost Reuter*, June 1, 1780, 1. "Der Großvesier hatte verbieten lassen, keine Lämmer vor der bestimmten Zeit zu tödten, die auf den 5ten des künftigen Monats angesetzt war."

facing the harshest punishment for a non-capital offense, based on a law that would not be passed by the Enlightened Austrian government.

In the second incident, another Turkish citizen faced the maximum punishment for a seemingly minor crime. The case involved a minister executed for trespassing in the sultan's harem. The story demonstrates both the Viennese stereotype of the despotic Turk and the fixation on the secrecy of the harem. The reporter wrote "as soon as [the minister] neared the first door, an executioner appeared who, without further ceremony, chopped off his head."[68] The minister received no trial or chance of appeal, and his punishment was harsh and swift. As soon as he was seen near the harem, he was beheaded. Like in the first case, the crime was not presented as serious, and it is unlikely that the paper's German readers viewed it as a fair punishment for the crime. Joseph II's criminal reforms banned executions for most civilian cases, as will be discussed below, and entering a harem or slaughtering a sheep seemed quite less serious to the Viennese than military insurrection or treason. By presenting a justice system so different and seemingly crueler then that of Enlightenment Europe, the reporter of this article emphasized the contrast between the Ottoman Empire and "civilized" nations stated in the first line. The article claimed that the Ottomans hoped that interaction with the West would bring about Enlightened reform, but the reporter made it clear that this was not the case. Turkey was still a land of cruel and swift punishments.

The depictions of despotic Turks in *Die Entführung* and the newspapers coincided with Joseph II's liberalizing reforms, and the opera can be viewed as a commentary on Enlightened rulership. In 1781, the Emperor reformed serfdom and issued an edict of religious tolerance, acts

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[68] *Reichspost Reuter*, June 1, 1780, "…so bald er sich aber nur der ersten Thüre genähert hatte, erschien ein Scharfrichter, der ihm ohne weitere Ceremonie das Haupt abschlug."

which—as Larry Wolff argued—proved Joseph's commitment to Enlightened liberalism.[69] Wolff suggests that Mozart intended Selim to represent the Austrian Emperor as a magnanimous ruler.[70] While Selim is certainly less cruel than Osmin, he would not serve as a particularly flattering depiction of Joseph II. For most of the opera, he is responsible for Belmonte and Konstanze's separation, and does not hesitate to threaten the lovers with torture. When Konstanze rejects his love, he promises "tortures of all kinds."[71] Similarly, when the Pasha first finds out that Belmonte's father is his sworn enemy, he leads Osmin aside to prepare tortures for the four Europeans.[72] Selim seems to favor the "swift execution of justice" noted in the *Reichspost Reuter* article, threatening harsh punishments and even death for non-capital offenses. Joseph would probably not have appreciated comparisons to such a ruler, so the idea that Mozart intended the entire character of Selim to represent Joseph seems stretched.

It is only in the final scene that Selim offered a favorable representation of Joseph II. The Pasha, to the great surprise and delight of the Europeans, decides it is better to release the son of his enemy and show mercy, proving his superiority through benevolence rather than violence. It is questionable that Mozart intended to represent Joseph through Selim, as the comparison would not hold to be favorable for most of the opera. Through this final, benevolent act however, Mozart praised the Emperor's enlightened reign. Joseph became well-known among his contemporaries for his liberal leanings, and Johann Pezzl noted many of the Josephine reforms in his description of Vienna. He noted, for example, that the Viennese enjoyed freedom of speech to a great degree, a policy that the writer viewed as exhibiting the "wise disposition" of the

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[69] Wolff, *The Singing Turk*, 189.
[70] Ibid, 189–90.
[71] Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 185. "Martern aller arten."
[72] Ibid, 376.

government.[73] Pezzl also praised Joseph for abolishing the death penalty in all cases tried outside of the military courts.[74]

The Josephine reforms derived from general Enlightenment ideas of punishment, which were expressed in Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*. In the chapter on punishment, Montesquieu argued that the death penalty should only be applied to crimes which have "violated security so far as to take or attempt to take a life."[75] Though the Josephine reforms did not follow this guideline exactly, the spirit was the same: the death penalty should be limited to only a few, extreme cases. There is also evidence that these criminal justice reforms were influenced by Cesare Beccaria and his monumental treatise *On Crimes and Punishment*, which, like *Spirit of the Laws*, advocated for the abolition of torture and the death penalty. The political science professor Joseph von Sonnenfels was particularly inspired by Beccaria, and urged Maria Theresa to abolish the use of torture within the Hapsburg Empire.[76]

Mozart exhibited a similarly positive outlook on the Josephine reforms, and his condemnation of torture and praise of mercy in the opera reflect this liberal attitude. Mozart expressed his attitudes towards torture and clemency through the European characters of *Die Entführung*, who react musically both to Selim's threats and his forgiveness. When he initially threatens Konstanze, she responds with her aria "Martern aller Arten," in which the heroine showed a noble resolve in the face of torture. After Selim threatens all of the Europeans,

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[73] Johann Pezzl, *Skizze von Wien Skizze von Wien unter der Regierung Joseph des Zweiten* (Vienna: J.B. Degen, 1803), vol. 1, 94–95.
[74] Ibid, vol. 2, 191–192. "Die Todesstrafe soll, außer den Verbrechen bey welchen nach dem Gesetz mit Standrecht verfahren werden muß, nicht statt finden."
[75] Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 191.
[76] David B. Young, "'Let Us Content Ourselves with Praising the Work While Drawing a Veil over its Principles': Eighteenth-Century Reactions to Beccaria's *On Crimes And Punishments*," *Justice Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1984): 166.

Konstanze and Belmonte sing a duet together in which the pair show a similar defiance. They declare to each other "For you beloved / I would gladly give my life!" showing their commitment to each other even in the face of death.[77] In both cases, Selim's threats only enhanced the nobility of the European protagonists. The Pasha's nobility was enhanced only after pardoning the Europeans.

The finale which follows is devoted exclusively to praising Selim's virtues as a ruler. Each of the Europeans offer thanks to the Pasha, followed by a janissary chorus celebrating Selim's mercy. Mozart used the *alla turca* style in the end to celebrate mercy rather than emphasize cruelty (as in Osmin's earlier arias). As mentioned in Chapter I, the *alla turca* style was popular with Viennese, and its appearance at the very end could have been part of Mozart's efforts to win over his audience. It could also, however, be a rhetorical move on the composer's part. Perhaps the appearance of *alla turca* music after Selim's transformation signified the universality of Enlightenment. The music could have represented the Turks as a people, and its placement at the end argued for their capacity as human beings to transition from despotism to Enlightenment.

Whether Mozart intended or his audience interpreted these humanistic arguments in the ending, the piece stands as a celebration of mercy and a condemnation of torture. Mozart depicted torture and cruelty negatively throughout the opera, and by doing so endorsed Joseph II's recent criminal justice reforms and supported the Emperor's image as an Enlightened ruler. Selim's cruelty enhanced the nobility of Konstanze and Belmonte, but his kindness enhanced his own honor, and transformed him from villain to hero. Though, according to Mozart's portrayal of

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[77] Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 388–9. "Um dich, Geliebter, geb ich gern mein Leben hin."

Osmin, cruel and unruly Turks could not appreciate such beneficence, noble Europeans would be eternally grateful. In the finale, Belmonte, Konstanze, Blonde, and Pedrillo stand in for Joseph's European subjects, praising him for his mercy. Only at the very end does Selim seem to represent the Emperor, as he forsakes despotism for kindness. Like the Pasha, Joseph shed the cruel practices of medieval despotism and brought his Empire towards the light. Whether or not Mozart thought that all Turks would eventually come to this transformation is difficult to determine. One way or another, however, Mozart believed that Enlightenment ideals would triumph over despotism, an argument that Joseph and the Viennese audience could support wholeheartedly.

Section IV

The Seraglio: Between Pleasure and Imprisonment

Turkish despotism was not limited to relations between individuals and institutions—such as religion and government. In the space of the seraglio, despotism took on an interpersonal manifestation, and the male master of the harem exercised complete, despotic control over his women. Through his female characters, Mozart challenged this control and portrayed the harem as a place of imprisonment. In the first scene of Act II, Konstanze's servant Blonde upbraids her new Turkish master Osmin for treating her like a slave. "You old geezer, do you think that you have a Turkish slave girl before you, who trembles at your command?"[78] With these words, she defies the gender dynamic which Europeans assigned to the harem, where beautiful women obeyed the wishes of their powerful, male masters. The institution of the seraglio (or harem) excited the imaginations of Europeans during the eighteenth century. They conceived the harem as a set of apartments for the women in an Ottoman noble's household, a space where the master of the palace could enter, lie with any of the women, and set them aside at his pleasure. The abundance of women residing in the seraglio and their perceived subjugation to the sultan or pasha's whims led to two conceptions of the harem in this period: as a place of pleasure, and as a place of imprisonment.

Alain Grosrichard explored this duality, citing accounts that praised the beauty of the women in the harem, while also outlining the strict rules forced on the slaves.[79] Artists, writers, and composers could construct their harems anywhere on the pleasure-prison spectrum, and

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[78] Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 150. "Denkst du alter Murrkopf etwa, eine türkische Sklavin von dir zu haben, die bei deinen Befehlen zittert?"
[79] Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court*, 141–42.

whichever aspect they emphasized depended on the intention and audience of the work. Pieces produced for French audiences, and which celebrated women's pleasure or mastery constructed the harem as a place of pleasure. Austrian works like *Die Entführung*, however, presented opposite views of pleasure in the harem. Only the master of the harem derived any pleasure from it, and the women only suffered. These differing depictions reflect a debate in the Enlightenment on the role of pleasure and sex. During this century, noblemen were allowed mistresses, yet women were often expected to maintain their fidelity to one man.[80] If men were already enjoying the company of multiple women, the harem scenes could reflect this dynamic.

At the same time, however, Enlightenment thinkers were reassessing the role of women's pleasure in sexual relations. Various sex manuals argued that it was vital for women to gain pleasure from sex, and without female pleasure, conception could not take place.[81] These theories seem to be at work in the background of many Austrian conceptions of the seraglio. Relations within its walls were fundamentally nonconsensual, and therefore lacked any chance of female pleasure and conception. Without conception, sex lost its noble purpose in the eyes of Enlightened viewers. As Blonde's protests indicate, the Pasha's seraglio was a space where men dominated women, from which Blonde (and Konstanze) derived no pleasure, and therefore must be liberated.

The conception of pleasure is apparent in *turquerie* paintings from the mid-eighteenth century. The predominantly French painters of Turkish scenes from this period delighted in portraying sultans surrounded by the beautiful women of their harem. Gluck's opera *La rencontre* expresses both conceptions. The prince Ali's beloved Reza is trapped in a harem,

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[80] Anna Clark, *Desire: A History of European Sexuality* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 117.
[81] Ibid, 105.

unable to see the prince. The harem also serves as a place of temptation, however, and Reza sends her servants to seductively dance for Ali in order to prove his faithfulness. Mozart's depiction of the seraglio, on the other hand, portrayed the harem solely as a prison. Blonde and Konstanze were trapped within the Pasha's walls, resisting the advances of the Turkish men. The seraglio constantly challenged the two women's faithfulness, and Osmin and Selim were on the brink of breaking their fidelity with torture at the beginning of the opera.

Whether artists and composers associated the harem with pleasure or imprisonment depended in part on the degree of identification in the works. Pieces that depicted the pleasure of the seraglio also encouraged the viewer to identify with the characters portrayed in the work. Paintings of harem scenes included allusions to the Western world in the characters physical appearances and architectural details. *La rencontre* encouraged identification by assigning noble qualities to muslim characters and setting the harem dances to European music. *Die Entführung*, however, emphasized the differences between its Turkish and European characters, and in doing so created a despotic harem. Through their arias, Blonde and Konstanze delineated the differences between a free, sensitive, European love and a possessive, coercive, Turkish love. Blonde sings of the proper ways to treat a European woman, contrasting them with Osmin's boorish attitude. Her music is soft and gentle, in direct opposition to Osmin's bombastic *alla turca* music. For her part, Konstanze defies the threats of the Pasha with music that is at times as forceful as the *alla turca* marches, yet which draws its real power from a wide expressive and stylistic range not present in Osmin's music. The depiction of the harem was thus dependent on the author's goals. If the goal was identification, the harem was a place of pleasure, and if the goal was emphasizing difference, the harem was a prison.

Turquerie and the Harem in French Paintings

Mozart's depiction of the harem in *Die Entführung* is overall negative: it is essentially a prison for the European characters. Blonde and Konstanze spend the opera resisting the advances of the Turkish men, while Pedrillo and Belmonte work to rescue the women from the seraglio. The harem serves an antagonistic role, keeping the two pairs of lovers separate and miserable. For earlier French painters, however, the harem was a place of pleasure and splendor, where magnificent sultans reclined and enjoyed entertainment by beautiful women. These French *turquerie* scenes provide a useful contrast to later German and operatic depictions of Turks, and help draw meaning from the harem of *Die Entführung*.

While operas were a mostly public spectacle, available to anyone who could afford a ticket, paintings during the eighteenth century rarely left the homes of the noble. *The Seraglio* (c. 1755) by Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre was one such work, commissioned by the Madame de Pompadour as an over-door for her music room.[82] The painting (Fig. 2) depicts a sultan reclining on a bed of pillows, while three women in elegant Turkish costume attend to him. One kisses his hand, another places her arm around him, while the third sits slightly back and looks on. The sultan's face expresses an overwhelming and helpless sense of pleasure, as he gazes upwards into the eyes of one of the women. Scenes conflating harems with male pleasure and female subservience had staying power, as *Harem Interior* (1770) by an unknown French artist demonstrates.[83] Similarly to *The Seraglio*, this painting depicts a reclining sultan attended by multiple women. Three women surround him, while two more play music for him on guitar and triangle. Both paintings depicted the harem as a place of pleasure, and neither give any indication

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[82] Williams, *Turquerie*, 102.
[83] Williams, *Turquerie*, 112.

FIG 2: *THE SERAGLIO* BY JEAN-BAPTISTE MARIE PIERRE, C. 1755

that the women resented their position. They are happy to attend and entertain the sultan as he reclines in luxury.

Though both paintings depict unmistakably Turkish scenes, the West is still present. The Turks in the paintings are all fair-skinned, their whiteness further emphasized by the presence of black servants in the background. In *The Seraglio*, a turbaned African peeks in from the right side of the frame, while in *Harem Interior* a similar figure sits slightly behind the concert. The sultans and their women are not portrayed as foreign others, but could easily pass as Europeans in Turkish costume. The painters also evoked the European world through architectural details. Greek columns support the ceilings of both rooms, and *Harem Interior* contains a Greco-Roman

edifice in the far background. In his analysis of these paintings and other Turkish scenes from the era, Haydn Williams suggested that overlaying Turkish and European themes acted as a means to celebrate luxury and pleasure.[84] Depictions of a European prince lying with three women would be scandalous, and so by moving the scene to a Turkish setting, artists avoided painting nobles in such a compromising position. By retaining aspects of European imagery within these harem scenes, painters could celebrate the pleasurable possibilities of the seraglio and subtly connect such pleasures to a European context.

The context in which these paintings were displayed and their audience also influenced how harems and Turks were displayed. As mentioned before, *The Seraglio* was commissioned by the Madame de Pompadour for her residence. Given its private display-place, the intended audience of the work were Pompadour's guests, who probably came from the higher levels of society. Additionally, Pompadour's status as Louis XV's mistress influenced the composition of the piece. She exerted considerable control over the king, especially at the beginning of their relationship when the two were romantically involved with one another.[85] By the time of the painting, her relationship with the King was purely platonic, and the work seems to recall a by-gone time when she, like the women in the harem, could use pleasure to control Louis. The Turks in the painting were not intended to contrast with Europeans (as in *Die Entführung*) but to represent them, hence the more positive portrayal of the harem.

The Harem in Gluck's *La rencontre*

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[84] Williams, *Turquerie*, 112.
[85] Donald Posner, "Mme. de Pompadour as a Patron of the Visual Arts," *The Art Bulletin* 72, no. 1 (March, 1990): 77.

C.W. Gluck's depiction of a harem in *La rencontre* also emphasized the pleasurable aspects of the Turkish palace, though the scene's subtext reminded audiences of the harem's prison-like qualities. The scene in question immediately precedes Rezia's reunion with Ali. Rezia's servant Balkis spies the prince wandering around Cairo, and summons him and his servant Osmin to a house adjacent the seraglio. Ali reluctantly accepts, for Balkis did not reveal that it was Rezia who issued the summons.[86] Once in the room, Ali is tempted by Dardané and Amine, two more of Rezia's servants. They dance for and profess their love to the prince, but Ali politely refuses their advances. "How happy I ought to be that a woman such as you should offer me her love," he replies to Dardané, "But alas, I cannot respond to it."[87] After witnessing Ali's continued faithfulness, Rezia finally reveals herself and the pair is lovingly reunited.

While Ali was uncomfortable throughout this scene, his servant Osmin enjoyed himself immensely. Upon entering the chamber, Osmin exclaims "This magnificent room, these ravishing creatures who entertain us so delicately! Isn't it a splendid welcome?"[88] The sumptuous charms of the room and the beauty of the women inside captivated Osmin. He succumbed completely to the seraglio's charms. As Dardané and Amine enter, Osmin praised them for their beauty, a quality which Ali admitted he found hard to resist. As Dardané enters, Osmin asks his master if she pleases him. He responds with reluctance, "Oh yes. Very much."[89] He tells each of the servants that he would very much like to respond to their advances, but that

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[86] Salter, *La Rencontre Imprévue*, 74-81.
[87] Ibid, 83. "Comme je devrais être heureux qu'une femme telle que vous m'offre son amour. Cependant, hélas, je n'y puis répondre."
[88] Ibid, 81. "Cette salle magnifique, ces ravissantes creatures qui nous régalent de manière si délicate! N'est-ce pas un accueil splendide?"
[89] Ibid, 83. "Oh si. Tout à fait."

he simply cannot. The pleasures of the seraglio tempt him strongly, and it is only his fidelity to Rezia that prevents him from partaking.

The scene also emphasized an aspect of the seraglio hinted at in the Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre painting, and constructed the harem as a space of female autonomy. The women in *The Seraglio* represented Madame Pompadour and her control over Louis XV, as evident through the helpless state in which they hold the sultan. The women in *La rencontre* also exercise control over Ali and Osmin, and the two men must play along with the game constructed by Rezia. This configuration of the seraglio reconciled Enlightenment ideals with the reality of the harem. While the women might be held against their will, they still exercised sexual autonomy and authority over their male masters. With the power of their beauty, the women of the harem maintained some control, even in their constrained surroundings.

Like the paintings, *La rencontre* was a work originally intended for a French audience, albeit a more public one. Its later success in Vienna suggests that the work had transnational appeal, yet its premiere in France still had an impact on its portrayal of Middle-Eastern characters. France enjoyed friendly relations with the Ottomans, and the two powers were allied against Russia and Austria in the late eighteenth century.[90] This diplomatic situation seems to have contributed to more positive views of Turkish harems, which emphasized the pleasurable aspects more than the imprisoning ones. The women in both the *La rencontre* and the paintings do not resist their surroundings as vehemently as the women in *Die Entführung*, and the men in the French works are quick to comment (either in words or visually) on the beauty found within the seraglio.

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[90] Fariba Zarinebaf, *Mediterranean Encounters: Trade and Pluralism in Early Modern Galata* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 146.

The warm relations between France and the Ottomans also seems to have contributed to the greater degree of identification in *La rencontre*. In *Die Entführung*, Mozart constructed the harem as a place of conflict and contrast between Europeans and Turks. Gluck's harem, however, did not serve this purpose. Such a goal would be impossible in this opera, since all the main characters are non-European. The seraglio in *La rencontre* was still a point of conflict, but not one contingent on ethnic and religious differences. The return of the sultan looms in the background of the seraglio scene, but it is not his otherness the characters fear, simply his power. While the set of the opera and the names of the characters evoked the orient, the music that accompanied Ali's temptresses and the lyrics they sung did not. Dardané's song "J'ai fait un reve des plus deux" contains no references to the East in its lyrics. She tells the prince that she had a wonderful dream in which the two of them sat together happily in love. Such words would be at home in almost any opera of the period, not just an oriental one. Likewise, the music is firmly in the Western tradition. It is set in a major key, and sweetly sighing violins accompany her singing, and there are no harmonic or instrumental indicators of the Turk. Amine's aria is much the same, and the two songs erode the walls between East and West. Though the story and setting informs the audience that all these characters are Muslim, they speak and sing like Europeans. The overlapping of European and Turkish tropes apparent in the *turquerie* paintings presents itself in this opera.

The Harem in Austrian Newspapers

As the previous sections demonstrated, works produced in France for French audiences tended to mix European and Eastern characteristics in their Turkish characters. Ali is a Middle-Eastern prince in name, but acts like a European tenor-hero. Similarly, the women in *The*

Seraglio are dressed as Turkish sultanas, though they represented the power of European mistresses over kings. In Austrian media from this time, however, the line between Turk and European is more clearly defined, especially in the space of the harem. They defined the harem as a prison, where Turks held European women against their will, as opposed to the French depictions of the seraglio as a place of pleasure.

One newspaper article from September, 1780 recounts a story that parallels that of *La rencontre* and *Die Entführung*. According to the report in the *Reichspost Reuter*, a beautiful Italian woman was captured at sea and held in a seraglio for two years, before being smuggled out by a young man. She found no pleasure in the seraglio, and the article insists that "Despite every flattery and small coercion, she resisted the title of sultana for two whole years, instead always offering up a prayer which was finally answered."[91] She did not relish in the pleasure of the harem like the women in the French paintings, but prayed for her rescue. This article clearly constructed the seraglio as a place of imprisonment from which women must be saved.

Another article found in *Das Wienerblättchen* (The Little Viennese Magazine) acknowledges the allure of the harem's pleasures, but offers a cautionary tale to those women who would enter the walls of the seraglio. The article, from the May 15, 1784 edition of the magazine, recounts the story of Lady Montagu entering the sultan's harem. Lady Montagu was the wife of the English ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1716–18, and achieved literary fame through her letters from her travels in Turkey. In this specific episode, she wished very much to see the harem, access to which was forbidden. "Under threat of death, no one besides

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[91] *Reichspost Reuter*, September 21, 1780. "Trotz aller schmeicheleyen und kleiner Zwangsmittel hatte sie ganzer zwey Jahre lang dem Titel einer sultaninn widerstanden, immer wurde sie über dem Gebet angetroffen welches denn endlich auch erhört worden."

the sultan, the eunuchs, and the women of the seraglio may enter there," the article explained.[92] Undaunted, the Lady bribed the guards and entered disguised as a harem slave. Inside, there were indeed many beautiful women, yet also danger. As the women lined up for the sultan, he threw Montagu a white handkerchief, signaling that she would be his companion that night. Not wanting to be with the sultan that night, "she immediately sent word to her husband, but that provided no means of rescue."[93] She was forced to stay in the harem with the sultan, despite her efforts to escape. This article recounted how, tempted by the supposed pleasures of the harem, Montagu discovered how much of a prison it could be.

The Seraglio in *Die Entführung*

Echoing the two newspaper accounts, Mozart constructed the harem as a place of captivity. The harem in this opera was not the pleasure garden constructed in earlier French paintings or the place of temptation constructed by Gluck. Blonde and Konstanze are both trapped within the harem's walls, and the scenes within the Pasha's palace focused either on Pedrillo and Belmonte's attempt to rescue their lovers, or the women's dissatisfaction with their new Turkish masters. Blonde expressed her resistance to Osmin in her aria "Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln," in which she refused his advances, declaring that the forceful ways of the Turks could not win her heart. Konstanze expressed similar sentiments to Selim in the middle of Act II. Through her virtuosic aria "Martern aller Arten," she refused to yield her heart to the Pasha despite threats of torture and punishment. By portraying the harem as a prison and having his heroines resist its constraints, Mozart emphasized the differences between a freer European love, and a despotic Turkish one.

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[92] *Das Wienerblättchen*, May 15, 1784.
[93] *Das Wienerblättchen*, May 15, 1784.

Mozart introduced Blonde's defiance first in the opera, at the very beginning of Act II. The first act of *Die Entführung* focused mainly on the male characters, particularly the conflict between Osmin and the two European men. In Blonde's scene, Mozart finally showed the plight of the women. This scene was not set in the harem itself, but rather in the garden of the palace—another location often associated with pleasure in the French paintings.[94] In the dialogue preceding Blonde's aria, she complained that Osmin's commands and scoldings were befitting only of a "Turkish slave-girl," and that European ladies required better treatment.[95] Her aria "Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln" (through tenderness and flattery) reinforced the differences between her and a Turkish slave by omitting any indications of the *alla turca* style. The key of the aria is A major, a tonality which neither Schubart nor Mozart identified as "Turkish." The instrumentation is similarly distant from *alla turca* music, and Blonde is backed only by strings. There are no wind or percussion instruments to suggest a march of any sort, much less any janissary instruments to suggest specifically Turkish music. The soft sound of the strings complement Blonde's gentle, lilting melodic line, evoking the tenderness advocated by the lyrics. Musically, this aria stands in stark contrast to Osmin and Selim's *alla turca* music, and through this contrast Blonde expressed her incompatibility with Turkish ideas of love and romance. She did not belong in the seraglio, and Osmin's threats and orders could not make her conform to her new surroundings.

Like her servant and fellow captive, Konstanze resisted the power of Selim and his harem through a solo aria, in this case "Martern aller Arten" (tortures of all kinds). Taking place in the

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[94] Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 150. "Garten am Palast des Bassa Selim; an der Seite Osmins Wohnung."
[95] Ibid.

middle of Act II—shortly after "Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln"—Konstanze erupted into her defiant and showy aria after Selim threatened to torture her if she did not accept his love. Placed in a similar situation to Blonde, Konstanze chose a different strategy in defying her Turkish master. While Blonde chastised Osmin for his boorish commands and instructed him on the proper way to treat a European lady, Konstanze met Selim's threats head-on. "Torture of every kind may await me," she begins "I laugh at torment and pain. Nothing will shake me."[96] She dared Selim to follow through on his threats, confident that no pain would change her devotion to Belmonte.

The music accompanying her declarations is similarly forceful and defiant. In its strong accents and rapid dynamic changes, the heroine's music shared some characteristics with the *alla turca* overture and janissary march from Act I. Konstanze's music, however, is completely in the European idiom. The power of the music derives not from a large chorus and orchestra, shrill piccolos, or crashing cymbals, but the emotional range of Konstanze. In terms of instrumentation, Mozart substituted the timpani for the bass drums, cymbals, and triangles, replacing janissary percussion with the standard European drum. Additionally, the emotional and stylistic range of the music is significantly more diverse than any *alla turca* march in the opera. Towards the middle of the aria, the forceful music is interrupted by softer phrases marked *ad libitum*, indicating a free tempo. Mozart introduced the softer phrase as Konstanze switches from open defiance to asking for mercy. She asks the Pasha to "Be moved to pity and spare me, and may Heaven's blessing reward you!" before again stating her resolve.[97] By switching between

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[96] Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 194–96. "Martern aller Arten mögen meiner warten. Ich verlache Qual und Pein. Nichts soll mich erschüttern."
[97] Ibid, 198–204. "Laß dich bewegen, verschone mich; des Himmels Segen belohne dich!"

defiance and supplication, Konstanze demonstrated a wide of emotions not seen in Osmin's arias. In "Solche her'gelaufene Laffen" for example, he only expresses varying degrees of anger. By giving her a greater emotional range, Mozart identified Konstanze as the superior character, as opposed to the emotionally limited Turks.

Both arias differentiated the heroines from their Turkish masters and surroundings through music and text. Blonde explicitly rejected Osmin's attitudes towards women, demanding that he treat her with the respect befitting a European lady. Konstanze defied the Pasha's threats of torture by singing an aria as powerful as any *alla turca* music, yet musically distinct from the Turkish style. Unlike the women in the French paintings or Rezia's servants in *La rencontre* Blonde and Konstanze refused to contribute to the pleasures of the harem. They did not dance for or attend to the men within the seraglio's walls, but resisted the demands of their masters at every turn. They were both more committed to their European lovers than to their Turkish masters. Through these characters, Mozart celebrated monogamous European love as superior to the promiscuity and enslavement that defined the harem. Additionally, he rejected the control that the harem masters exercised over their female slaves, arguing instead that the consensual relationships between the women and their European lovers gave the women more pleasure, and were therefore superior. For Mozart and his Austrian contemporaries, the seraglio was an institution of despotism that constrained and threatened natural, monogamous love.

Conclusion

In his juxtaposition of European and Eastern characters in *Die Entführung*, Mozart anticipated a framework common among nineteenth-century Orientalist operas. In what musicologist Ralph P. Locke described as the "paradigmatic Oriental-opera plot," a male European hero enters a foreign land, confounds the cruel savages he meets there, and wins the heart of a beautiful, exotic woman.[98] Aside from the nationality of the heroine, this plot structure is quite similar to the one of *Die Entführung*. This difference between Mozart's opera and later works can be explained by a general shift in Oriental representation. As the East weakened relative to the West, Oriental characters became increasingly feminized.[99] Despite differences regarding the gender politics of the Orient, both *Die Entführung* and subsequent Orientalist works drew strong differences between their European and Oriental character, painting the Europeans as the superior characters in the process.

Mozart's European characters are superior to their Turkish counterparts because they embrace Enlightenment ideals, while Osmin and (at the beginning of the opera) Selim cling to outdated beliefs. "Vivat Bacchus" illustrated the lingering power of religious laws in Ottoman Turkey. Osmin very much wanted to drink the wine, yet the possible punishments inflicted by the Pasha gave him pause. Pedrillo, however, is free to partake in the delightful beverage, and openly criticizes the Prophet Muhammed's law. Speaking as Joseph II considerably weakened the power of the Catholic Church within his empire, Pedrillo rejected the shackles of religion in favor of Enlightened freedom.

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[98] Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 181.

[99] Nasser Al-Taee, Representations of the Orient in Western Music: Violence and Sensuality (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 5.

Mozart not only evoked religion to advocate for Enlightened ideals, but crime and punishment. When Osmin and Selim threaten the Europeans with torture, the victims sing touching yet defiant arias, drawing the audience's sympathies towards the Europeans and away from the Turks. After Selim's proclamation of mercy, however, the music at last supports him and elevates him as the hero of the narrative. Selim's transformation complicates the East/West divide, as an Oriental despot shows Enlightened magnanimity. It suggests that Turks were not inherently excluded from good governance, but that their current government perpetrated and encouraged cruelty. Just as European rulers like Joseph II could reform their government and grant their subjects freedom, so too could Turkish rulers like Pasha Selim abandon cruelty and embrace mercy.

Finally, the Europeans showed their Enlightened superiority through their conception of love. The love that Belmonte shows for Konstanze and Pedrillo for Blonde is loyal, tender, and monogamous. Osmin and Selim, however, expressed a love defined by the walls of the harem. It was constraining, forceful, and polygamous. Blonde and Konstanze were only one of many women for the Pasha and his servant. Even if Selim claimed Konstanze as his favorite, she was not his only love, and her constraining circumstances prevented Konstanze from feeling any pleasure in Selim's advances. The opera celebrates the love of the European couples (especially Belmonte and Konstanze), while the harem played the part of antagonist. Within it, Blonde and Konstanze are subject to threats of torture and their loyalty is put to the test.

The opera ultimately advocates for Enlightenment ideals of freedom. Mozart strongly associated these ideals with the European characters, while associating the Turks with outdated despotism. He created European characters free from the excesses of religion, criticized Osmin

and Selim's cruel governance, and celebrates Belmonte's tender affection for Konstanze. While the Turks in this opera had *potential* for Enlightenment, they are not inherently Enlightened, and Osmin never abandons his cruel ways. For the most part, then, this opera follows Said's paradigm of Orientalism. The Turks are the antithesis which defines the Europeans; the former are antiquated and oppressed, defining the latter as Enlightened and free.

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